

CHAPTER XII—Continued.

They struck into the mountains, following a cattle trail that wound upward with devious twists. The man rode, and the girl walked in front with the elastic lightness, the unconscious flexuous grace of poise given her body by an outdoor life. By dusk they were up in the headwaters of the creeks. The resilient muscles of the girl had lost their spring. She moved wearily, her feet dragging heavily so that sometimes she staggered when the ground was rough. Not once had the man offered her the horse. He meant to be fresh, ready for any emergency that might come. Moreover, it pleased his small soul to see the daughter of Luck Cullison fagged and exhausted but still answering the spur of his urge.

The moon was up before they came upon a tent shining in the cold silvery light. Beside it was a sheetiron stove, a box, the ashes of a camp fire, and a side of bacon hanging from the limb of a stunted pine. Cautiously they stole forward.

The camp was for the time deserted. No doubt its owner, a Mexican sheepherder in the employ of Fendrick and Dominguez, was out somewhere with his flock.

Kate cooked a meal and the convict ate. The girl was too tired and anxious to care for food, but she made herself take a little. They packed the saddlebags with bacon, beans, coffee and flour. Blackwell tightened again the cinches and once more the two took the trail.

They made camp in a pocket opening from a gulch far up in the hills. With her own reata he fastened her hands behind her and tied the girl securely to the twisted trunk of a Joshua tree. To make sure of her he lay on the rope, both hands clinched to the rifle. In five minutes he was asleep, but it was long before Kate could escape from wakefulness. At last she fell into troubled slumbers.

From one of these she awoke to see that the morning light was sifting through the darkness. She was shivering with the chill of an Arizona mountain night. Turning her body, the girl's eyes fell upon her captor. He was looking at her in the way that no decent man looked at a woman. Her impulse was to scream, to struggle to free feet and run. What did he mean? What was he going to do?

But something warned her this would precipitate the danger. She called upon her courage and tried to still the fearful tumult in her heart. Somehow she succeeded. A scornful, confident pride flashed from her eyes into his. It told him that for his life he dared not lay a finger upon her in the way of harm. And he knew it was true, knew that if he gave way to his desire no hole under heaven would be deep enough to hide him from the vengeance of her friends.

He got sullenly to his feet. "Come. We'll be going."

Within the hour they saw some of his hunters. A wisp of smoke rose from the basin below. Grouped about it were three men eating breakfast. "Don't make a sound," warned Blackwell.

His rifle covered her. With all her soul she longed to cry for help. But she dared not take the risk. Even as the two on the edge of the bowl withdrew from sight one of the campers rose and sauntered to a little grove where the ponies were tethered. The distance was too far to make sure, but something in the gait made the girl sure that the man was Curly. Her hands went out to him in a piteous little gesture of appeal.

She was right. It was Curly. He was thinking of her at that moment despairingly, but no bell of warning rang within to tell him she was so near and in such fearful need of him.

Twice during the morning did the refugee attempt to slip down into the parched desert that stretched toward Sonora and safety. But the cordon set about him was drawn too close. Each time a loose-seated rider lounging in the saddle with a rifle in his hands drove them back. The second attempt was almost disastrous, for the convict was seen. The last of a bullet whistled past his ears as he and his prisoner drew back into the chaparral and from thence won back to cover.

Kate, drooping with fatigue, saw that fear rode Blackwell heavily. He was trapped and he knew that by the Arizona code his life was forfeit and would be exacted of him should he be taken. He had not the hardihood to game it out in silence, but whined complaints, promises and threats. He tried to curry favor with her, to work upon her pity, even while his furtive glances told her that he was wondering whether he would have a better chance if he sacrificed her life.

From gulch to arroyo, from rock-cover to pineclad hillside he was driven in his attempts to break the narrowing circle of grim hunters that

hemmed him. And with each failure, with every passing hour, the terror in him mounted. He would have welcomed life imprisonment, would have sold the last vestige of manhood to save the worthless life that would soon be snuffed out unless he could evade his hunters till night and in the darkness break through the line.

He knew now that it had been a fatal mistake to bring the girl with him. He might have evaded Bolt's posies, but now every man within fifty miles was on the lookout for him. His rage turned against Kate because of it. Yet even in those black outbursts he felt that he must cling to her as his only hope of saving himself. He had made another mistake in lighting a campfire during the morning. Any fool ought to have known that the smoke would draw his hunters as the smell of carrion does a buzzard.

Now he made a third error. Doubting back over an open stretch of hillside, he was seen again and forced into the first pocket that opened. It proved to be a blind gulch, one offering no exit at the upper end but a stiff rock climb to a bluff above.

He whipped off his coat and gave it to Kate.

"Put it on, Quick!"

Surprised, she slipped it on.

"Now ride back out and cut along the edge of the hill. You've got time to make it all right before they close in if you travel fast. Stop once—just once—and I'll drop you in your tracks. Now git!"

She saw his object in a flash. Wearing his gray felt hat and his coat, the pursuers would mistake her for him. They would follow her—perhaps shoot



He Turned to Run as the Other Fired.

her down. Anyhow, it would be a diversion to draw them from him. Meanwhile he would climb the cliff and slip away unnoticed.

The danger of what she had to do stood out quite clearly, but as a chance to get away from him she welcomed it gladly. From the lip of the gulch she swung abruptly to the right. Her horse stumbled and went down just as a bullet flew over her head. Before she was free of the stirrups strong hands plucked her shoulders to the ground. She heard a glad, startled cry. The rough hands became immediately gentle. Then things grew black. The last she remembered was that the mountains were dancing up and down in an odd fashion.

Her eyes opened to see Curly. She was in his arms and his face was broken with emotions of love and tenderness.

"You're not hurt?" he implored.

"No."

"He didn't mistreat you?" His voice was trembling as he whispered it.

"No—no."

And at that she broke down. A deep sob shook her body—and another. She buried her head on his shoulder and wept.

Without losing an instant the convict set himself at the climb. His haste, the swift glances shot behind him, the appalling dread that made his nerves ragged, delayed his speed by dissipating the singleness of his energy. His face and hands were torn with catclaw, his knees bruised by a slip against a sharp jut of quartz.

When he reached the top he was panting and shaken. Before he had moved a dozen steps a man came out of the brush scarce seventy-five yards away and called to him to surrender. He hung his rifle to place and fired twice.

The man staggered and steadied himself. A shell had jammed and Blackwell could not throw it out. He turned to run as the other fired. But he was too late. He stumbled, tripped and went down full length.

The man that had shot him waited for him to rise. The convict did not move. Cautiously the wounded hunter came forward, his eyes never lifting from the inert sprawling figure. Even now he half expected him to spring up, life and energy in every tense muscle. Nor till he stood over him, till he saw the carelessly flung limbs, the uncouth twist to the neck, could he believe that so slight a crook of the finger had sent swift death across the plateau.

The wounded man felt suddenly sick. Leaning against a rock, he steadied himself till the nausea was past. Voices called to him from the plain below. He answered and presently circled down into the gulch which led to the open.

At the gulch mouth he came on a little group of people. One glance told him all he needed to know. Kate Cullison was crying in the arms of Curly Flandrau. Simultaneously a man galloped up, flung himself from his horse and took the young woman from her lover.

"My little girl!" he cried in a voice that rang with love.

Luck had found his ewe lamb that was lost.

It was Curly who first saw the man approaching from the gulch. "Hello, Cass! Did you get him?"

Fendrick nodded wearily. "Yep. He's up there." The sheepman's hand swept toward the bluff.

"You're wounded?"

"Got me in the shoulder. Nothing serious, I judge."

Cullison swung around. "Sure about that, Cass?" It was the first time for years that he had called the other by his first name except in irony.

"Sure."

"Let's have a look at the shoulder."

After he had done what he could for it Luck spoke bluntly. "This dashed feud is off, Cass. You've wiped the slate clean. When you killed Blackwell you put me out of a hostile camp."

"I'm glad—so glad. Now we'll all be friends, won't we?" Kate cried.

Cass looked at her and at Curly, both of them radiant with happiness, and his heart ached for what he had missed. But he smiled none the less. "Suits me if it does you."

He gave one hand to Luck and the other to his daughter.

Curly laughed gaily. "Everybody satisfied, I reckon."

CHAPTER XIII.

Loose Threads.

Those who knew about Sam's share in the planning of the Tin Cup hold-up kept their mouths close. All of the men implicated in the robbery were dead except Dutch. Cullison used his influence to get the man a light sentence, for he knew that he was not a criminal at heart. In return Dutch went down the line without so much as breathing Sam's name.

Luck saw to it that Curly got all the credit of frustrating the outlaws in their attempt on the Flyer and of capturing them afterward. In the story of the rescue of Kate he played up Flandrau's part in the pursuit at the expense of the other riders. For September was at hand and the young man needed all the prestige he could get. The district attorney had no choice but to go on with the case of the State versus Flandrau on a charge of rustling horses from the Bar Double M. But public sentiment was almost a unit in favor of the defendant.

The evidence of the prosecution was not so strong as it had been. All of his accomplices were dead and one of the men implicated had given it out in his last moments that the young man was not a party to the crime. The man who had owned the feed corral had sold out and gone to Colorado. The hotel clerk would not swear positively that the prisoner was the man he had seen with the other rustlers.

Curly had one important asset no jury could forget. It counted for a good deal that Alec Flandrau, Billy Mackenzie, and Luck Cullison were known to be backing him, but it was worth much more that his wife of a week sat beside him in the courtroom. Every look and motion of the girl-wife radiated love for the young scamp who had won her. And since they were tender-hearted old frontiersmen they did not intend to spoil her joy. Moreover, society could afford to take chances with this young fellow Flandrau. Long before they left the box each member of the jury knew that he was going to vote for acquittal.

It took the jury only one ballot to find a verdict of not guilty. The judge did not attempt to stop the uproar of glad cheers that shook the building when the decision was read. He knew it was not the prisoner so much they were cheering as the brave girl who had sat so pluckily for three days beside the husband she had made a man.

From the courtroom Curly walked out under the blue sky of Arizona a free man. But he knew that the best of his good fortune was that he did not go alone. For all the rest of their lives her firm little steps would move beside him to keep him true and steady. He could not go wrong now, for he was anchored to a responsibility that was a continual joy and wonder to him.

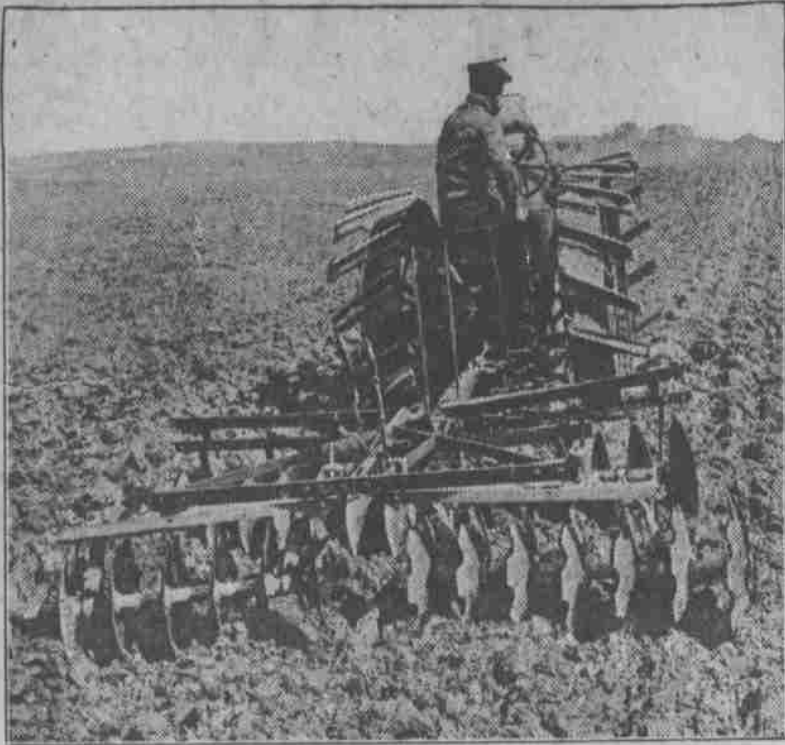
(THE END.)

Consent Assured.

He (accepted)—Now I've got to speak to your father, and I know, he dislikes me.

She—Don't worry, dearest; he has far greater aversion to my bills.

TRACTORS ARE DISPLACING HORSES



One Man and Tractor Doing the Work of One Man and Four Horses.

Tractor investigations, with special reference to the influence of the tractor on horse labor, were made in the summer and fall of 1918 on 191 corn-belt farms. The operators of these farms, all tractor owners, were visited by a representative of the United States department of agriculture, and detailed information on all farm operations was gathered. The inquiry covered a full year's work, so that the part played by the tractor might be noted in all its relations.

The investigation was carried on in Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Iowa, Missouri, Kansas and Nebraska. In each of these states localities were visited in which a large number of tractors were in operation. The information obtained, while perhaps strictly and fully applicable only to the farms visited, may be taken as a general guide as to the results which might be obtained in using a tractor on any corn-belt farm of like type and organization.

The statements here made and conclusions drawn are not advanced as being final, but simply as additions to the available information regarding farm tractors.

Range of Conditions.

To obtain results which would give as near a representative average as possible, an effort was made to get reports covering tractor operations under as many different conditions as possible, and hence the conditions represented range from adverse to ideal. The farms visited ranged from flat to hilly. The soils varied from the heaviest gumbo through all the various loams to light, drifting, sandy soils. Some of the gumbo soils now under cultivation on these farms were formerly unproductive, owing to the inability of horses to plow the soils. With the introduction of the tractor, this land has come under cultivation and is now yielding big returns. It



Four Horses and One Man Doing the Work of a Tractor.

was found that tractors were operated successfully in what would be termed unfavorable as well as favorable seasons, which would tend to show their general adaptability.

While the section covered is roughly called the corn belt, farm practices are not uniform throughout the region. In most parts of the eastern corn-belt states commercial fertilizers and lime are used, these being applied by horse-pulled distributors. In preparing the land for crops all the ground may be plowed, or the small grain may be seeded on the previous year's corn ground by disk or harrow, without plowing. The latter practice reduces work for horses or tractor in the busy season. Whether most of the plowing is done in the fall or only a small part, and the rest in the spring, depends largely on location. Where fall and spring plowing are done in about equal amounts on individual farms, the tractor is used more in the fall than in the spring, and horses vice versa. It was found that when all the reports obtained were grouped together only five more operators plowed in the fall than in the spring, but the number of acres plowed in the fall averaged 23.7 more per farm. The number of men using horses as an auxiliary source of power was practically the same in each case.

Tractor Saves Labor.

Many farms have woodlands, and as these are cleared the tractor is used for sawing wood for market, thus increasing the days of belt operation. The scarcity of labor in 1918 hampered the gathering of crops, and in the states on the eastern edge of the corn belt the tractor was used to a considerable extent in the hay field, to the exclusion of horses.

As corn is the principal crop in this region, the effect of the tractor on

horse labor will be more noticeable in the case of this crop than that of any other crop grown, the average acreage of corn per farm of those visited being 83.5 acres, which is 32 per cent of the tillable area of these farms. The remaining crops grown on these farms, in order of crop acreage, are: Wheat, hay, oats, barley and rye.

Only the physical relationship of tractor power to horsepower has been considered, and no attempt is made here to compare the relative costs of doing work by these sources of power. The number of horses displaced on these farms is also shown, but no inference has been drawn as to whether the work is being done more cheaply as a result of the change.

Summary of Results.

Briefly summarized, these are the principal facts brought out or emphasized by this study:

1. The number of horses disposed of on 141 farms averaging 346½ acres, on which tractors had been used for a year or over, was 2½ per farm.
2. The average number of tillable acres per horse increased from 26½ to 38½ after the purchase of the tractor.
3. Nine operators out of 101 displaced horses entirely on plowing, disking and harrowing.
4. Only 16 operators allowed their horses to stand idle while the tractor was in use.
5. The number of horses displaced by the tractors on these farms was governed by the number it was necessary to retain for corn cultivation and other work current at the same time, which the tractor could not do.
6. The horses remaining on these farms are doing about 75 per cent of the tractive work and tractors the remainder.
7. The tractor was used for an average of 29 ten-hour days per year on the home farm. No record of the amount of custom work done was obtained.
8. A three-plow tractor on these farms does the work of 8½ horses in plowing, disking, harrowing and harvesting.
9. After purchasing the tractor, the average size of the farms was increased by 22 acres, or 6 1-3 per cent.
10. The principal advantage of a tractor is its ability to do heavy work in a shorter time than it can be done with horses.

INCREASE PROFITS BY GRADING ALL PRODUCE

Farmer Should Sort According to Size and Quality.

Grade Specifications Recommended by Bureau of Markets Have Benefited Farmers Materially Where Practiced.

When a farmer orders a box of bolts of a certain make and size he does not expect to find a thin layer of the bolts specified on the top of the box and assorted bolts underneath. In the world of commerce a manufacturer who pursued such practices would soon be bankrupt.

The same principle applies to the sale of farm products, say specialists of the bureau of markets, United States department of agriculture. Before sending produce to market the farmer should sort it as to quality and size. The bureau of markets from time to time has recommended grade specifications for various products, and wherever these recommendations have been followed satisfaction and increased monetary returns have generally resulted. For instance, it is estimated that in 1919 the potato growers in Virginia increased their profit a half million dollars by grading their produce. Similar results are being obtained in other states.

PLOWING FOR WINTER WHEAT

Decided Advantage in Preparing Land Early Is Shown by Experiments in Kansas.

In Kansas experiments, wheat planted on land plowed in late July or early August yields on the average of 15 bushels per acre, whereas, wheat planted on land plowed in September has yielded only 11 bushels per acre.

CANADA'S HARVEST IS OVER

Threshing Shows Increase Over Expected Yields.

The Winnipeg Free Press of a few days ago contained a cartoon of which the following is a copy:



This probably as much as anything else will give some idea of the state of mind of the Western Canada farmer, as he watches the tally from the threshing machine while his wheat is being carried to the elevator.

From all sections of the country, the most optimistic reports are received, the local and city papers are filled with reports from twenty to thirty bushels of wheat to the acre, while in some places oats are showing a record of as high as 120 bushels to the acre.

Referring to Saskatchewan, it is confidently expected that the wheat yield will be nearly 125 million bushels. Heavy rains which fell in districts that did not promise so well in July, had greatly improved the prospects there, and there is no question that paying yields will be produced. The yields in the eastern part of the province may not show to the advantage that will those of the western part, but too much cannot be said of this, for it is the results as they come from the machine, and often these prove happily deceptive.

There is now every reason to believe that the wheat crop of the three prairie provinces will approach 250 million bushels.

Alberta will exceed the 70 million bushels that had been looked for. The average yield will be considerably higher than it has been in the province in any of the last four years. The Department of Agriculture in a recent report gave the opinion that it cannot fall below twenty-two bushels to the acre, and that it might easily pass the twenty-five bushel mark. Most of the wheat in the province when the report was written, stood well up to three feet high, and on some fields was still higher. The report goes on that in parts of Southern Alberta forty and fifty bushels to the acre yields will not be uncommon, while there will be a good many yields of from thirty to thirty-five bushels to the acre.

In the northwest part of the province, in the country surrounding Battleford and adjacent to the Canadian National Railway line to Lloydminster, and south the crops are excellent and the yield will be heavy.

A larger than average wheat crop is being thrashed in Manitoba. It has been estimated that the total yield of the three provinces will not be less than 225,000,000 bushels, and it may be that somewhere between 250,000,000 and 300,000,000 bushels will be the final figure.

Oats is a good crop in all three provinces. This crop has also grown rapidly during the last two or three weeks. Excepting from those fields which were sown late for green feed, the yield will be heavy and the grain excellent. Barley and rye are above the average. There was sufficient help to harvest the crop.—Advertisement.

Rubber Made From Wood.

Rubber from the ocellillo, or candlewood, of Arizona is stated to resemble ordinary rubber in all respects and to vulcanize satisfactorily. The ocellillo is very abundant in the wild state. A ton of the raw material yields about 200 pounds of the gum and 80 pounds of a tarry substance, and in the experimental factory recently established a ton of crude gum is reported to be produced daily. The tarry by-product is of value for certain uses.

The Cuticura Toilet Trio.

Having cleared your skin keep it clear by making Cuticura your every-day toilet preparations. The soap to cleanse and purify, the Ointment to soothe and heal, the Talcum to powder and perfume. No toilet table is complete without them. 25c everywhere.—Adv.

Husband and Wife.

"You never take me anywhere, I never see any life."

"What are you talking about? You can see plenty of life watching the motorcars whizz past our front windows."

No Time to Lose.

Love at first sight may be a good idea, if you have a few days at the beach.—Louisville Courier-Journal.

A Breezy One.

Doctor—"Your wife needs a change of air." Tightwad—"Well, I'll get her an electric fan."